

**State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC)
Subcommittee for State Operated Programs' Annual Plan Review**

**Summary of Meeting
May 15, 2007**

SSEAC Committee Members Present: Jacquelyn Nelson, Sharon Duncan, Cindy Mills
Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Staff Present: Patricia Abrams, Merilee Fox, Karen Trump, Melissa Smith

All school divisions, state-operated programs, the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton, and the Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind, and Multi-Disabled at Hampton are required to establish eligibility for funding under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA '04). IDEA '04 requires that each local educational agency (LEA), in providing for the education of children with disabilities within its jurisdiction, has in effect policies, procedures, and programs that are consistent with the State's policies and procedures, which have been established in accordance with IDEA '04. This Annual Plan process helps ensure the LEA's accountability, and in turn the Virginia Department of Education's accountability, for implementation of the IDEA '04 requirements in providing programs for children with disabilities.

Annual special education plans for State-Operated Programs (SOPs) are submitted to establish eligibility to receive funding under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA '04) and 619 and Project Set Aside funds. These documents are collected as a component of the department's overall responsibility to ensure compliance with the IDEA '04, its 2006 federal implementing regulations, and the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs in Virginia, effective March, 2002. This funding is made available on the condition that special education policies and procedures are implemented as approved by the Virginia Department of Education.

SOPs are not responsible for the development of a local advisory committee, and are not required to complete the local special education advisory committee section of the Annual Plan. Rather, SOPs conduct a review of their policies and procedures with an assigned subcommittee of the State Special Education Advisory Committee on an annual basis on a date designated by the Virginia Department of Education. The regional and local detention homes do not receive these federal funds and therefore are not required to submit Annual Plans. However, representatives from the detention homes participated in the SSEAC sub-committee review of SOPs. Mental Health programs not serving pre-school age populations are not eligible for Application to 619 Funds.

In addition, the sections of the Virginia Regulations, which are listed below, do not apply to SOPs. Therefore, these sections of the annual plan are not submitted by SOPs.

1. Assurance of Free Appropriate Public Education Division Wide – 8 VAC 20-80-40 – B
2. Child Find – 8 VAC 20-80-50
3. Placement of Children at the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton or the Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled at Hampton – 8 VAC 20-80-65
4. Private School Placement – 8 VAC 20-80-66
5. Federal Funds – 8 VAC 20-80-120 –B, C, F, and H

Staff at the department work with individual SOPs, including detention homes, to refine areas where the need for modification of the policies or procedures may exist.

The SOP Annual Plans were mailed to the SSEAC sub-committee members prior to the meeting for their review.

The SOP representatives reported that they submitted the assurance document that indicates the necessary changes in their policies and procedures to be in compliance with state and federal guidelines. They also reported on the extent to which the current plan has been implemented. Other information specific to each facility is listed below.

1. Department of Correctional Education

Changes were made to indicate more procedural statements relative to implementation of procedures such as, indicating who is responsible for carrying out each procedure. State and federal funding are used to support personnel and operational costs. Activities were implemented for staff development especially to address the highly qualified requirements and purchase instructional materials for students to access the general education curriculum.

2. Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind at Staunton

Part B funds are used to supplement staff salaries, for student tuition to Valley Voc-Tech, contracted interpreting services, summer programs and ancillary services to enhance the program. Staff at the Staunton campus have, and will continue to be, involved in planning for the consolidation of the two schools and serving students who also have cognitive and other disabilities in addition to hearing and visual impairments.

3. Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind and Multi-Disabled at Hampton

Part B funds are used to support staff development, job coach positions, contracted interpreting services, classroom materials, community-based instruction, ASL instruction for staff and augmented communication devices. As part of the Virginia Schools consolidation, the General Assembly directed that the day school program be transferred to a locality to operate.

4. State Mental Retardation Facilities

Four of the five state mental retardation facilities are currently serving school-age children with intellectual disabilities. Approximately 50% of students in the facilities are enrolled in local public school programs; the remaining students receive their education

program on facility grounds. Federal funds are used for staff development and conference attendance, supplies and equipment, assistive technology, substitute coverage, and partial support for staff positions.

5. State Mental Health Facilities

The Mental Health facilities develop one Annual Plan with separate grant applications for the federal funds. Minor changes were made to address direction from VDOE staff who reviewed the Plan's policies and procedures. The education programs are evaluated based on the use of sound instructional techniques and making the classroom environment engaging for students. Federal funds are used for instructional materials, supplies to support access to the general curriculum and students' IEP goals, supporting students in community-based activities, incentives for affective education, and staff development.

6. Regional & Local Detention Homes

Changes were made to the procedures manual for detention home education programs to address the new federal and state guidance and provide clarification, including:

- updating terminology relating to state assessments and accountability for students with disabilities,
- reviewing incoming students' IEPs for compliance with regulations,
- evaluating students to determine special education eligibility, and
- adding requirements for notice to parents and determining the frequency of reporting IEP goal progress to parents.

7. Hospital Education Programs

In addition to making the required changes in procedures to reflect federal and state guidance, the hospital education programs are evaluated at various times for adherence to federal and state laws, program effectiveness, and other audits. Further reviews are conducted by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of healthcare organizations (JCAHO) and the hospitals of residence for each program. These evaluations and reviews reflect adherence to JCAHO standards and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and regulations. Fiscal monitoring is completed through cooperative activities between each program and its local supporting school division. Funds are used for professional development including research-based practices and response to intervention, books and materials, assistive technology, teleconferencing and robotics stationed at the hospital and the student's home school, updating parent information and developing information for parents on assistive technology, expanding video streaming for preschool activities, software, and diagnostic assessment instruments.

8. Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center

Virginia's Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) is one of eight comprehensive rehabilitation centers in the United States. All clients/students attending WWRC have already been identified with a disability. WWRC serves approximately 500-600 students a year, 225 at any given time. The majority of the clients/students are age 18 to 22 years of age. All required updates were made to the Plan. Funds are used primarily on supporting 8 full-time equivalent instructors that provide academic,

employment skills, and occupational training skills to students. The newest offering is the Life Skills Transition Program, which focuses on employment skills and basic life skills such as money management, self advocacy, cooking, route finding, transportation and personal health.

Discussion during the meeting focused on issues related to the programs' use of the VDOE's Omega accounting system for the tracking of federal funds. Each program representative was directed to VDOE staff for technical assistance.

The participants were asked to discuss needs for, or challenges with, providing services in the SOPs. The following challenges and needs were mentioned by SOP staff:

1. High student enrollment turnover makes it difficult to evaluate the program effectiveness on student outcomes.
2. It is difficult to coordinate services for students with multiple needs, such as meeting specialized needs of students with autism and sensory impairments who also have mental health issues.
3. SOP staffs continue to need professional development for autism, especially for residential staff.
4. There appears to be an increase in the return rate of students in detention facilities and increase in female youth needing detention and community placements for girls.

No public comment was received.

A suggestion for future review meetings was to consider using remote locations such as videoconference facilities, and to determine the need for remote locations, at least, 30 days prior to the meeting for providing public notice.

The meeting was adjourned.