

**State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC) Meeting**

Wyndham Airport Hotel  
2801 Hershberger Road, Northwest  
Roanoke, Virginia

**Thursday, October 7, 2004**

**Present:**

Elizabeth Vincel, Carmen Sanchez, David Martin, Kevin Sutherland, Stacie Ellis, Mike Wong, Charlene Christopher, Emily Dreyfus, Heidi Lawyer, Linda Richardson, Leslie Snyder, Cindy Mills

**Staff:**

Doug Cox, Judy Hudgins, Patrick Andriano, Jonnell Lilly, Cathy Pomfrey

**Others:**

Pierre Ames (PEATC), Helen Barrier (T/TAC-VA Tech), Mary Lutkenhaus (DRS presenter), Annette Sannuti -VA Protection Advocacy Office

**Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions**

Dr. Linda Weber, Superintendent of Roanoke County Public Schools welcomed the SSEAC members to Roanoke and thanked them for their hard work.

Mrs. Charlene Christopher, Chair, reviewed the agenda.

**Presentations and Work Sessions**

**Assistant Superintendent's Report**

- Mr. H. Douglas Cox, Division of Special Education and Student Services

**State Improvement Grant**

Mr. Cox provided members with an update on the State Improvement Grant (SIG). The department will be using the Strategic Instruction Model (University of Kansas) a research based effective approach to help students successfully access the general curriculum. Academies for instructional strategies to focus on science and social studies were held this summer with more planned.

**One-Percent Cap Update**

Mr. Cox reported that the U.S. Department of Education approved a cap of 1.13% for the number of proficient scores in the VAAP that may be counted toward the calculation of AYP. This process was only for the 2003-2004 year.

### Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (VSDB) Feasibility Study

Mr. Cox stated that the feasibility study to consolidate the two state schools for the Deaf and the Blind is moving forward. An architectural firm is working with the Department of Education to complete the study.

### Assessment

Mr. Cox told members that a task force would begin the revision of the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP). Under NCLB all children in grades 3-8 will have to be tested and a preliminary revision has begun for that process. Further, as stated in the Accountability Workbook submitted to Federal Government under NCLB, Virginia will be developing grade level alternative assessment for students based on grade level standards.

### Quick Guide for Families

A Superintendents Memo was distributed. The guide will be placed on the web site soon. Also copies will be sent to special education directors and the Parent Resource Centers.

### **Dispute Resolution Report**

- Mr. Patrick Andriano and Ms. Jonnell Lilly, Office of Dispute Resolution & Administrative Services

Mr. Patrick Andriano, using a PowerPoint presentation, reviewed the [Annual Report of the Dispute Resolution Systems and Administrative Services](#). Patrick is responsible for coordinating the due process system, training hearing officers, and sitting in on hearings. He reminded members that mediators are not employees of the DOE. They are reimbursed for services by the department. Professional mediators apply for the eight positions to represent these cases. Mediation is always available, however the schools are not required to offer it unless they are faced with a possible due process.

Ms. Jonnell Lilly continued with the presentation and discussed the Complaints Resolution System and Annual Plans. She told members that the department coordinator is working to develop a more efficient system that will significantly impact school divisions and state operated programs.

The committee discussed the Dispute Resolution Report. The trends noted in these areas were: Critical areas of noncompliance-IEP implementation, Parental Notice and Written Prior Notice; procedural safeguards, Discipline, Areas of improvements, and Consent.

### **Virginia Department of Education's Parent Ombudsman Services**

- Ms. Judy Hudgins, Office of Student Services

Ms. Judy Hudgins stated that the department created this office to provide parents with information to help themselves resolve disputes. This is a non-legal, neutral position offering information that will help parents work through the system and gain knowledge of services available. A parental packet of information is being sent to parents that call requesting assistance, including items such as regulations, the parent's guide, and the troubleshooting document, all designed to assist the parents in resolving their disputes.

### **Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (VDRS) “Order of Selection”**

- Ms. Mary Lutkenhause, VDRS

Ms. Lutkenhause reviewed the *Order Of Selection* with members. Numbers have to be examined each year. Students are placed into categories and those with the most severe disabilities will be served first. There is a waiting list for those not making the priority list. While on the waiting list the student may be referred to other appropriate services. The cost of services has risen incredibly, so even though funding has not been cut, it cannot keep up with rising costs.

### **Public Comment**

Mrs. Christopher reviewed the procedure for public comment and welcomed those present. The committee heard from six parents representing Superintendents’ Region 6.

### **Lunch**

Mrs. Christopher introduced Ms. Gwendolyn Atkins – Director of Special Education in Franklin County Public Schools.

### **State Improvement Grant Update**

#### **“The Strategic Instruction Model and Content Literacy Continuum”**

- Ms. Helen Barrier, Virginia Tech T/TAC and SIM Professional Developer

Ms. Barrier presented an overview of the Strategic Instruction Model and the Content Literacy Continuum. This is a research-based program that is effective in providing students with disabilities access to the general curriculum.

### **Teacher Licensure Revision Task Force Update**

- Mr. H. Douglas Cox, Assistant Superintendent

Mr. Cox reported that the task force had met once and was scheduled for a second meeting. He noted that the recommendation will go to ABTEL in November.

### **DOE & Partnership for People with Disabilities**

- Ms. Judy Hudgins, Office of Student Services

A grant has been awarded for training local SEACs. This is a two-year grant titled: *Effectiveness Training for Local Special Education Advisory Committees: Building local SEACs for Better Special Education Services and Student Outcomes*. The goal is to build local capacity so that local advisory committees can become more effective. The project management team will meet shortly. One of the first things to be examined is a needs assessment for local advisory committees.

Mr. Doug Cox commended the Virginia Board with Disabilities for their support and expressed his pleasure that we were able to effect this partnership.

A public forum was held at the hotel Thursday evening.

**State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC) Meeting**  
**Friday October 8, 2004**

Present:

Kevin Sutherland, Mike Wong, Elizabeth Vincel, Stacie Ellis, David Martin, Cindy Mills, Carmen Sanchez, Linda Richardson, Leslie Snyder, Heidi Lawyer, Charlene Christopher, Annette Sannuti, Emily Dreyfus

Staff:

Doug Cox, Judy Hudgins, Cathy Pomfrey

**Call to Order**

**Business and Subcommittee Work & Reports**

**Approval of July 2004 Meeting Minutes**

Mrs. Charlene Christopher presented the July minutes.  
The minutes were approved as written

**Membership**

Mr. Cox stated he would submit reappointments at the October Board of Education meeting. A nomination for the position of a parent representative from Region VII would also be submitted.

**Bylaws**

The committee discussed the State Board of Education bylaws changes. The SSEAC has a committee working on bylaws now and will address this issue to make SSEAC Bylaws consistent with the state's bylaws.

**Ms. Carmen Sanchez made a motion that the SSEAC postpone voting on its bylaws in order to allow the bylaws to be rewritten in accordance with the changes in the Virginia Board of Education's bylaws that affect advisory committees.**

**Stacey Ellis seconded the motion. The motion carried**

**Standards of Quality (SOQ)**

Mr. Doug Cox reviewed the important aspects of the Standards of Quality. The State Special Education Advisory Committee agreed to work as a committee as a whole and make

comments on the SOQ. Ms. Carmen Sanchez suggested that parents be made aware of their rights and responsibilities under applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

**Ms. Carmen Sanchez made a motion that the content of the committee's discussion on the Standards of Quality be submitted to the Board of Education as public comment from the committee.**

**Ms. Linda Richardson seconded and the motion carried.**

### **Constituency Reports**

Ms. Sanchez pointed out that Fall 2003 is the most recent issue of the SSEAC [Parents Newsletter](#). She will get parents together to complete another as it was suggested that this would help educate parents as to the regulations.

It was proposed that the newsletter be mailed to LAC chairs, local special education directors, and Parent Resource Centers. A letter should go out before the newsletter about the newsletters availability on the Web and linking it to local web sites.

**Ms. Heidi Lawyer made a motion that the assistant superintendent for Special Education and Student Services send out a communication to all special education directors about the requirements for membership on LACs.**

**Ms. Leslie Snyder seconded the motion and the motion carried.**

The committee had a general discussion about autism referencing comments heard at the forum conducted the previous evening. It was decided that autism would be the focus of the January meeting.

There was discussion concerning the Thursday evening open meeting and how responses from the SSEAC would be handled. It was decided that persons attending would be responded to in the same fashion as the usual public comments. It was also suggested that Sandra Peterson's troubleshooting guide and a copy of the parent's guide and the SSEAC newsletter be included with the response.

Ms. Heidi Lawyer encouraged everyone to watch the documentary airing on October 10, Partners-The Fight for Inclusion for People with Disabilities

Ms. Carmen Sanchez asked to see the response letter at the next meeting that is sent out to parents that attended the public meeting. She also requested that a report be presented at each meeting reflecting actions to public comments.

### **Future Agenda Items**

#### January Meeting

- Preliminary child count

- Autism: status on licensure, numbers of kids in autism
- Report from Paul Raskopf – LRE numbers
- Update from Committee on Restraint and Seclusion
- Evening Public Comment meeting

There was a brief discussion and it was decided to have the Thursday evening open session to meet with people at the January 2005 meeting in Richmond as well as at the upcoming meeting in Tidewater.

Dr. David Martin asked that SSEAC members show appreciation to Dr. Kevin Sutherland for his hard work on the committee. Dr. Sutherland has submitted his resignation due to other job commitments.

### **2004-05 Meetings Dates & Locations**

#### **January 20-21, 2005**

Richmond, Holiday Inn Koger Center, Midlothian Turnpike

#### **April 14-15, 2005**

TBA, Tidewater region

#### **July 21-22, 2005**

Richmond, Holiday Inn Koger Center, Midlothian Turnpike

### **Meeting Adjourned**