

**State Special Education Advisory Committee  
October 6 – 7, 2005  
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401**

**Minutes**

**THURSDAY October 6, 2005**

**8:00 A.M. – 8:30 A.M.**

**EXECUTIVE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**

**THURSDAY October 6, 2005**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Michael Behrmann, Charlene Christopher, Susanne Conroy, Emily Dreyfus, Stacie Ellis, Anne Fischer, David Martin, Cindy Mills, Rick Richardson, Carmen Sanchez, Leslie Snyder, Peter Squire

**STAFF PRESENT**

Pat Abrams, Doug Cox, Judy Douglas, Judy Hudgins, Tom Manthey, Cathy Pomfrey, Art Stewart

**INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair, Ms. Charlene Christopher called the meeting to order. Introductions were provided. State Senator R. Edward Houck was introduced and gave welcoming remarks. Ms. Christopher thanked him for his work on behalf of the children of Virginia.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes were adjusted to show that Cindy Mills attended on Friday. Ms. Stacie Ellis moved to adopt the minutes as corrected. **The minutes were approved.**

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Mr. Doug Cox stated that names would be submitted at the November 2005 Board of Education (BOE) meeting to fill current vacancies. Vacancies include that of a parent from Superintendents' Region 6, a representative of corrections agencies, and a representative from the state foster care system which is a new IDEA requirement. Also with the resignation of Ms. Shirley Ricks, a representative of other state agencies is needed. Dr. David Martin and Ms. Leslie Snyder agreed to be reappointed for a second term on the committee.

Discussion followed regarding subcommittee membership and the structure of the subcommittees. Members, in talking about subcommittee membership, discussed the possibility of conflict when certain committees met simultaneously.

In the morning meeting of the Executive subcommittee there was discussion regarding future meetings and their location. The decision was made to change the July 13-14, 2006 meeting in Richmond to northern Virginia (Manassas). **The motion coming from committee, needed no second; the motion carried.**

## **CONSTITUENCY REPORTS**

Ms. Cindy Mills talked about how changes in the federal regulations will affect facilities with a small number of teachers.

Ms. Carmen Sanchez attended local advisory committee meetings addressing membership issues and providing information on responsibilities of local committees. She stated that there are concerns regarding highly qualified personnel and issues relating to the use of long-term substitutes.

Ms. Emily Dreyfus stated that school discipline is an ongoing issue. Parents in her region are concerned about a variety of issues including children being out of school for long periods of time, not getting diplomas and student achievement.

Ms. Susanne Conroy talked about the issue of special education children being excluded from preschool.

- Mr. Cox stated that administrators are constantly being reminded that students with disabilities are not to be excluded. Ms. Dreyfus suggested that a superintendent's memo might be needed. Mr. Cox proposed that a staff member from the Title 1 office at the department of education be invited to attend the January 2006 meeting and discuss some of the topics being addressed in that area.

Ms. Stacie Ellis told members that an open forum scheduled to be held at her local advisory committee that evening had been moved to the following week.

Dr. Mike Behrmann discussed several higher education issues including recent training in alternate assessment which has received good reviews. He complimented the breath of higher education training being offered by the department of education. Another concern was the new teacher licensure requirements and how to produce special educators who are also highly qualified.

Ms. Anne Fischer talked about the difficulty regarding racial equality on the local special education advisory committee. She stated she had attended a special education advisory committee pilot training that was excellent and she encouraged people to attend.

Dr. David Martin, also regional chair of the region 4 of superintendents study group, has

been working with setting up a retreat for superintendents to address issues that superintendents need to be aware of. He also mentioned concerns with parents placing disabled students in private schools outside districts and the problems with funding.

- Mr. Cox updated members on some of the issues in the regarding funding.

Dr. Rick Richardson discussed several areas of concern to school administrators. He stated that one problem is not the issue of recruiting special education teachers but retaining them as many are transitioning to regular education. The issue of supply and demand continues and is being magnified by the concern over highly qualified. He also discussed autism and the related funding problems.

Ms. Charlene Christopher, as chair of the VEA special education committee, mentioned concerns they have with the implementation of state and federal special education regulations as a result of the newly authorized IDEA. Other issues include licensure requirements for special education teachers, co-teaching, collaboration and inclusion. There are also concerns about behavior for both regular education and special education students.

## **BREAK**

Ms. Christopher asked visitors to introduce themselves.

## **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

H. Douglas Cox, Assistant Superintendent  
Division of Special Education and Student Services

Mr. Cox updated members on several issues. When talking about Highly Qualified (HQ) he mentioned that the national and state governments have had concerns as well as those issues that concern special education teachers. Ms. Mills raised the issue of HQ as it relates to private schools who often have limited staff.

Mr. Cox told members that Dr. JoLynne DeMary, Superintendent of Public Instruction, has announced her plans to retire at the end of the year. She has always been a very strong advocate for children with disabilities. She's the first woman and the first local director of special education to become Virginia's chief state school officer. She has provided extremely positive leadership.

Mr. Cox provided an update on Department of Education staff changes.

On the federal level Mr. Cox discussed the status of proposed IDEA regulations. He told members that the final version of the regulations could look very different after input resulting from public comments at public hearings.

The Virginia Department of Education was heavily involved in preparing to receive evacuees from hurricanes Katrina and Rita. A center was created at Fort Pickett with

phenomenal support from the bordering school divisions. Dr. Cindy Cave was in charge of the educational component. As no one was evacuated to Virginia, the teacher kits with school supplies were shipped to Louisiana to schools that lost everything.

Mr. Cox said the department is continuing to expand the project for IST teams. It has very strong implications over the long haul.

Mr. Cox provided a brief update on the consolidation of two schools for the deaf and the blind. An overview with results of Board action at the July and September BOE meetings should be posted on the web soon.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public comment was heard from Ms. Cherie Takemoto, Ms. Terry Tyler, and Ms. Emily Dreyfus. Ms. Christopher summarized the comments and said participants would receive a response.

Ms. Christopher summarized the public comments.

Ms. Charlene Christopher announced that she was appointing David Martin to the membership committee.

## **LUNCH**

### **MEDIATION UPDATE**

Art Stewart, Coordinator of Mediation

Mr. Art Stewart provided a brief overview of mediation and what is involved in the arbitration process.

### **VIRGINIA ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (VAAP) INSTRUCTIONAL MANUAL AND CURRICULAR DESIGN**

John Eisenberg, Special Education Specialist

The Virginia Alternate Assessment Program has been redesigned based on new requirements from NCLB and IDEIA. Significant feedback from the field was also used to assist in the redesign process. A collaborative effort that involved over 200 professionals has led to the creation of a new academic curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Committees of professionals utilized a process to select SOL that reflected the most appropriate content skills in the core subject areas of Math, Reading, Science, and History/Social Science. These selected SOL have been renamed the Aligned Standards of Learning (ASOL). There have been a number of teacher resources developed to assist in the implementation of the ASOLs including an enhanced scope and sequence, curriculum frameworks, and strategies for differentiating instruction. There have been over 15 statewide trainings on both the new assessment and the resource materials since September. Nearly 3100 manuals have been distributed to date. All

materials have been posted to TTAC Online as well as the VDOE website.

## **BREAK**

### **REPORT FROM NOMINATION COMMITTEE**

**Dr. Mike Berhmann was nominated as an at-large member on the executive committee. Coming from committee, it needed no second. There were no nominations from floor. It was approved.**

### **ANNUAL REPORT TO BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Members discussed the committee's annual report to the Board of Education. There was discussion regarding the content and format of the report and the timeframe for the report. Members gave suggestions as to content that should be added or removed. They also requested that several items be moved to different locations within the document.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Dr. Mike Berhmann made a motion that the SSEAC recommend to ABTEL that the license teachers of students with disabilities be divided into two licenses, elementary k6/middle secondary, further include coursework to meet HQ under NCLB. Ms. Carmen Sanchez seconded. After some discussion the motion carried.**

**Dr. Michael Berhman made a motion to incorporate training and content under NCLB; Ms. Carmen Sanchez seconded. The motion carried.**

Ms. Ann Fischer asked about the committee receiving FOIA training. She also asked about receiving data on LRE. Ms. Ellis requested a presentation for parents of students who are ready to transition out of the school system and into legal age – competency, legalities, age of majority, etc.

Mr. Cox told members that Peter Squire has been invited by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) to participate on a young consumer's panel at the upcoming annual conference. This would be the first time there would not be a speaker – these are all young adults that have been through the system. Mr. Squire has been very active in transition and youth leadership. He is a very strong advocate for young people and has received national attention.

## **FRIDAY October 7, 2005**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Michael Behrmann, Charlene Christopher, Susanne Conroy, Emily Dreyfus, Stacie Ellis, Cindy Mills, Linda Richardson, Carmen Sanchez, Peter Squire, Leslie Snyder

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Pat Abrams, Doug Cox, Judy Douglas, Judy Hudgins, Cathy Pomfrey, Paul Raskopf, Art Stewart

### **VDOE PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED FEDERAL REGULATIONS, IDEA 2004**

Dr. Judy Douglas, Director of Dispute Resolution/Administrative Services

Dr. Judy Douglas presented a summary of the VDOE's comments on the proposed federal regulations.

### **VIRGINIA STATE IMPROVEMENT GRANT (SIG)**

Mr. Tom Manthey, Grant Coordinator

Mr. Tom Manthey, SIG Coordinator, presented a general overview and status update of the Virginia State Improvement Grant (SIG). Each goal of the SIG was reviewed with a description of current activities. The four established demonstration schools began the second round of professional development in October. A coaching institute prepared instructional coaches to work in the four demonstration schools over the next three years. Teaching Content to All (TCA) Institute held Roanoke trained 22 College and University professors in Content Enhancement Routines to be included in pre-service instruction of teachers. Five regional partnerships between higher education and local education associations were selected to provide in-service instruction for teachers to meet the federal requirement for 'highly qualified' in all eight regions of Virginia. A Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) network was established of all the SIM professional developers in Virginia. A partnership between VDOE and PEATC was established to develop a parent guidebook for the secondary years for family of students with disabilities. Finally, a policy taskforce was established to develop policies that promote educational best practices for student with disabilities.

### **SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS TASKFORCE UPDATE**

Dr. Patricia Abrams, Director of Special Education Instructional Services

Dr. Patricia Abrams provided an update on the October 4 and 5, 2005 "Special Education Service Delivery Standards Task Force" meeting. The purpose of the task force is to examine practice issues to, later, extrapolate policy for revising special education staffing and caseload standards. Examining service delivery practices that reflect patterns/themes in schools where students with disabilities are obtaining and maintaining good results was

discussed. There are 70 stakeholders who will participate either by attending meetings or reviewing draft recommendations and providing feedback outside of meetings. Task force participants will be representative of the following groups:

1. Local special education administrators
2. Local central office instructional administrators
3. School administrators
4. Teachers
5. Parents
6. Students
7. College/University faculty
8. State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC)
9. Virginia Department of Education staff
10. Virginia's Training/Technical Assistance Center (T/TAC) personnel

The SSEAC members on the task force are Charlene Christopher, Mike Behrmann, and Anne Fischer.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC) EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING PROJECT**

Melanie Sterling - Partnership for People with Disabilities  
Judy Hudgins - Virginia Department of Education

Ms. Melanie Sterling and Ms. Judy Hudgins provided an update on Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) effectiveness training project activities. The Virginia Department of Education and the Partnership for People with Disabilities at VCU, with funding from VDOE and the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, have partnered to improve the effectiveness and meaningful participation of local SEACs statewide. Ms. Anne Fischer stated that she had attended the pilot training and other members were invited to attend trainings in their regions.

## **SUBCOMMITTEES**

Ms. Susanne Conway questioned the amount of time allotted for subcommittee meetings. Mr. Cox recommended that the Executive Committee meet before January 2006 to discuss meeting structure and content for future meetings and draft an agenda for the January meeting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT FOLLOWUP**

Mr. Cox reported that a letter had been sent to all who commented at the public comment session at the previous meeting. One issue was favorably resolved and the others received a thank you in appreciation for providing comment. There were four letters mailed.

Staff will send a thank you letter to the individuals who came to the Thursday evening forum.

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Self Determination Framework
- LRE
- FOIA
- State assessment – Nate Sparks
- Regulations and procedures
- Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T/TACs)
- State Performance Plan

## **MEETING ADJOURNED**

### **Future Meeting Dates and Locations**

Ms. Christopher provided a brief summary of past meeting dates and locations. The committee members agreed to travel outside of Richmond for two meetings each year and set a two-year schedule. The schedule for 2006-07 is considered tentative until revisited in July 2006.

October 6-7, 2005 – Prince William  
January 12-13, 2006 – Richmond  
April 26, 27-28, 2006 – Abingdon  
**July 13-14, 2006 – Richmond**  
**Change to Northern VA**

October 19-20, 2006 - Harrisonburg  
January 11-12, 2007- Richmond  
April 19-20, 2007 - South Hill  
July 19-20, 2007 – Richmond