

**State Special Education Advisory Committee
(SSEAC)
Holiday Inn Select
Richmond-Koger South Conference Center
Richmond, Virginia
January 24-25 2008**

DRAFT MINUTES

Thursday January 24, 2008

	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Judy Averill	x		Mona Holmes	x	
Mike Behrmann	x		Cindy Mills	x	
Suzanne Bowers	x		Jacqueline Nelson	x	
Bob Chappell	x		Peter Squire	x	
Susanne Conroy		x	Carletta Wilson	x	
Sharon Duncan	x		Bob Whytal	x	
Anne Fischer	x		Christina Draper	x	
Melodie Henderson	x		Tamara Temoney		x
Carol Hamilton		x			

<i>Department of Education Staff</i>							
Doug Cox	x	Pat Burgess		Gloria Dalton	x	Angela Phenicie	x
Suzanne Creasey	x	Marianne Moore		Sandra Ruffin	x	Susie Cumbia	x
Judy Hudgins	x	Melissa Smith	x	Debbie Pfeiffer	x	Paul Raskopf	x
Pat Abrams	x	Cathy Pomfrey	x	Anu Upahadaya	x		

<i>Guests</i>			
Susan Sullivan-Tubach	Angela Cimmino	Dana Yarbough	Beth Haw
Kristin Puryear	Loli McMahan	Mauretta Copeland	Raymond Copeland
Chip Greene	Susan Foster	Michael Flagg	

Call to Order

Ms. Anne Fischer called the meeting to order and declared a quorum. Ms. Fisher asked for introductions.

Mr. Doug Cox congratulated Dr. Michael Behrmann on receiving the J.E. Wallace Wallin Special Education Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the Council for Exceptional Children. This award recognizes persons who have demonstrated lifetime dedication to the field of special education and who have made continued and sustained contributions to the education of children and youth with disabilities.

Presentations

Special Education State Performance Plan Least Restrictive Environment Data

- Mr. Paul Raskopf, Director, Financial and Data Services

Ms. Anne Fischer introduced Mr. Paul Raskopf. Mr. Raskopf provided an overview on the status of the Special Education State Performance Plan which consists of 20 indicators prescribed by the United States Department of Education. He reviewed several of the indicators and steps the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is taking to implement the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) concerning reporting Special Education State Performance Plan data to the public.

For Indicator 8: Parent Involvement, Mr. Doug Cox provided a brief overview of the parent survey which had been disseminated by VDOE for the past two years to parents with a child receiving special education services. Additional options for the third year of the survey will be explored.

Mr. Cox also mentioned Indicator 14: Post-Secondary Outcomes and referring to youth, who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, and enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school.

As there are so many new members, it was recommended that Mr. Raskopf provide a review of the special education data system at a future meeting.

Special Education Continuous Improvement Monitoring

- Dr. Sandra Ruffin, Director, Federal Program Monitoring

Dr. Sandra Ruffin, director of federal program monitoring, reported on the state's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process. The process has changed to focus more directly on specific areas of need as determined by the school division's performance against indicators from the special education Annual Performance Report (APR). In 2007-2008, twenty-two school divisions will receive on-site monitoring, 14 of which were selected based on their performance against five indicators including graduation rate, dropout rate, assessment scores (reading/English and

mathematics), 65-day evaluation and eligibility timeline, and development and implementation of IEPs for preschoolers. The selection was the results of a formula uniformly applied to all school divisions. Eight school divisions with a special education population of 1,000 or more were randomly selected, one from each of the 8 Superintendent's Regions. This selection from larger size school districts helped to offset the number of small size districts. It has not been determined whether VDOE will continue with this selection process. This is a pilot year for "focused" monitoring and "targeted assistance." The reviews will focus primarily on indicators where the school division's performance is below state targets, but will also focus on procedure requirements.

The VDOE is developing guided questions to facilitate discussion with central office administrators and plans to make those instruments available to all districts. The questions, regulatory and nonregulatory, are designed to identify barriers that cause districts' inability to meet the state targets established for the APR indicators. School districts performing below the required targets on compliance indicators are required to develop corrective action plans and demonstrate compliance within one year. This requirement also applies to any noncompliant findings from on-site monitoring. Encouraging continuous improvement in results and ensuring implementation of the IDEA are the responsibility of the state's monitoring systems.

Virginia Accessible Instructional Materials Center

- Mr. John Eisenberg, Specialist, Office of Special Education Instructional Services
- Dr. Mike Behrmann, Director, Helen A. Kellar Institute for Human disabilities

Mr. John Eisenberg and Dr. Mike Behrmann provided a review of the Virginia Accessible Instructional Materials Center.

NIMAS is National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard
34 CFR 300.172(d)(2)

- Purpose: "timely delivery" of high quality accessible specialized formats to students with print disabilities

What is the NIMAC? The National Instructional Materials Access Center
(Part D, Sec. 674)

- A center at American Printing House for the Blind (APH)
- Receives and maintains a catalog of NIMAS instructional materials
- Does not have student ready versions
- Provides access to source files by accessible media producers
- Develops procedures to protect against copyright infringement

Virginia regained access to NIMAC after President Bush signed H.R. 2764, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008, on December 26th, 2007, which removed the indemnification clause with NIMAC for which Virginia government agencies were forbidden from signing contracts. The Virginia Department of Education wrote draft language for the Virginia General Assembly, House Bill 137, and Senate Bill 356 in which textbooks that are on the Virginia Textbooks adoption list must have the publisher deposit a NIMAS version to the NIMAC.

Virginia's Solution to Accessible Instructional Materials has been to establish the Accessible Instructional Materials Center of Virginia (AIM-VA) at George Mason University. AIM-VA will create Accessible Instructional Materials for students with disabilities in Virginia in NIMAS, Accessible PDF, Structured Word versions, Braille: (DBVI), Large Print: (Office of Corrections), and Audio: (Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic) formats. They will coordinate with Virginia publishers to get NIMAS files, work with accessible media producers to produce student ready materials, and provide technical assistance and training.

To date AIM-VA has hired professional staff, purchased and had equipment delivered, and trained staff on production of materials. A website online: www.aimva.org has been developed and a library ordering database is almost finished and we are consulting with library database programmers to make it 508 compliant. A training and implementation manual (8th draft) and draft PowerPoint training materials have been developed. A pilot field test is beginning with Fairfax target students. Finally, the project is funding a formal research study at GMU to explore impact of AIM on student achievement. Copyright protections are being developed by establishing a digital right manager (DRM) that the LEA Superintendent designates. The DRM will control the certification process (Chaffe or IEP), disseminate student ready materials, and control/track timely delivery. There will be an automated timeout feature of digital materials to ensure that they are not transferred to other individuals after the loan period is completed. Plans are to have materials available to LEAs in the late summer or early fall and training to begin in late spring and continue through the fall.

Eligibility will include students eligible under the Chaffee amendment (blind, low vision, physically unable to use standard print material or certified as having a reading problem from organic dysfunction) and also will be expanded in Virginia to students with disabilities who are served under IDEA regulations who do not meet the requirements under the Chaffee Amendment. These children must have the requirement for accessible instructional media under their IEP.

Vision Impairment & Deaf-Blind Services

- Mr. Glen Slonneger, Director, Education Services, Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)
- Barbara McCarthy, Director, Virginia Library and Resource Center, Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
- Susan Payne, VR Program Director, Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired

Mr. Glen Slonneger introduced Ms. Barbara McCarthy who directs the Library and Resource Center and deals with the production and purchase of Braille and large print textbooks that DBVI loans to school divisions. He also introduced Ms. Susan Payne who directs the agency's Vocational Rehabilitation program. DBVI is refocusing its transition process to ensure that all young adults who are blind and visually impaired are receiving appropriate agency vocational rehabilitation support. Mr. Slonneger reviewed some of the resources and services provided by DBVI that include education services for infant and toddlers from birth through age 21;

resources for parents and educators such as vision exams and vision aids; also training and professional development services for teachers; and Braille and large print textbooks.

Ms. Barbara McCarthy discussed some of the issues and problems with their current way of producing Braille materials and noted that it is a very long and involved process by the current system. Ms. Susan Payne spoke about issues with students who are in transition and the supports needed as they leave high school and enter the workforce.

Virginia Project for Children and Youth with Dual Sensory Impairments/Deaf-Blindness

- Mr. Mark Campano, Project Director

Mr. Mark Campano talked to members about the Virginia Project for Children and Youth with Dual Sensory Impairments/Deaf-Blindness which is a statewide program designed to provide technical assistance, training, distance education, and networking information to families, service providers, and individuals, birth through 21, who are deaf-blind/dual sensory impaired. Through a collaborative approach, the Project will provide assistance to families, educators, and service providers by providing technical assistance, information, and trainings to increase awareness, build knowledge, and increase capacity in the area of deaf-blindness/dual sensory impairments, which in turn will lead to the improvement of the quality of education (outcomes), and the quality of life for individuals, birth through 21, with dual sensory impairment/deaf-blindness.

Public Comment

- ***Dean and JoAnna Bryant*** – wished to encourage the SSEAC to support parents’ rights to consent to any change in their child’s IEP.
- ***Angel Barnhill*** – parent of seven-year old child; concerned about maintaining consent in changes being made to child’s IEP.
- ***Sandy Hermann*** – urged the SSEAC to ensure that student’s educational rights are maintained when advising the Board of Education; wished to express opposition to elimination of parental consent when partially or completely terminating special education and/or related services.
- ***Dana Yarbrough*** – has daughter with physical, intellectual and sensory disabilities who receives special education services and supports in a self-contained classroom. She talked about difficulties with assessment, and the shortage of TBVI in the county and the problems caused by this situation.
- ***Loli McMahan*** – updated the committee on the progress of her son’s education since an earlier public comment; he is now fully integrated in the general education class and has full access to the general education curriculum. She told about the formation of a grass roots group, SIEFA (Supporting Inclusive Education for All).
- ***Mauretta Copeland*** – also a member of SIEFA; talked about daughter, Imanni who has

cerebral palsy. She spoke about problems with daughter's placement.

- **Chip Greene** – attended a school board meeting regarding the lack of a general physical restraint policy within the school system and then found that a revised manual had been sent out in the fall of 2007. He talked about concerns with the manual and the school system's physical restraint policy.
- **Susan Foster** – mother of 9-year-old twin girls who have Down syndrome; she's a member of SIEFA; she addressed issues regarding the insufficient use of Functional Behavior Assessments and Positive Behavior Intervention Plans in the school system.

Lunch

Public Comment Continued

Written letters were read by Ms. Suzanne Bowers.

- Sheree Brown Kaplan- concerns about the proposed revision of the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia
- Wesley Robinson-issues regarding educational discrimination

Schools for Students with Disabilities Fund Update

- Ms. Susie Cumbia, Specialist, Financial and Data Services
- Ms. Angela Phenicie, Monitoring Specialist, Private Day Schools

Ms. Susie Cumbia and Ms. Angela Phenicie provided an overview of the Schools for Students with Disabilities Fund. The Fund will provide grants to private special education schools for the purpose of reducing tuition and providing scholarships to students.

One hundred per cent of the monies to the fund come from individual and business donations for which the donor receives a 40% tax credit. Three million dollars in tax credits may be awarded annually, equating to the potential for \$7.5 million in grants to schools each year.

At the present time, there have been no donations to the Fund.

U.S. Office of Special Education Programs Leadership Conference Report

- Mr. Peter Squire

Mr. Peter Squire had attended the U.S of Special Education Programs Leadership Conference, on behalf of the SSEAC chair. The conference presentation was about the duties of state special education advisory committees and how to make them effective; things mentioned included:

1. the committee does an annual priority list of goals for the year with things to follow up on throughout the year
2. the committee should assess once a year; decide what topics require further information; note things the committee does well

3. the committee should review goals at the beginning of each year and determine what has been accomplished

Business Session

Minutes

Ms. Carletta Wilson moved that the minutes be approved. Dr. Mike Behrmann seconded and the minutes were approved.

Operational Procedures Review

Ms. Anne Fischer questioned whether changes need to be made in the time allowed for public comment. It was decided to table the issue until a future meeting and see if the numbers of participants warrant a change.

Membership

The list of membership terms was reviewed and it was noted that appointment terms for Mr. Peter Squire and Dr. Mike Behrmann would be ending in coming months. Ms. Cindy Mills, also ending, is eligible for reappointment but has requested not to be reappointed. Mr. Cox was hopeful that appointments for these members could be made at an upcoming Board of Education meeting.

Subcommittee membership and assignments

The subcommittee matrix was reviewed with no changes. It was noted that Ms. Judy Averill will fill Mr. Mike Wong's position on the committees.

Public Comment follow-up

Members reviewed the public comments that were presented at the October 2007 meeting.

AD HOC Subcommittees

Report of Ad Hoc Personnel Committee

Ms. Suzanne Bowers, nominated by the personnel committee, and with no nominations from the floor, was approved to fill the at-large vacancy on the Executive Committee.

SOP Review Committee

Ms. Sharon Duncan reported that the committee is scheduled to meet May 8, 2008 at the department of education from 1:00 – 3:00. The meeting will be open to the public.

Assistant Superintendent Report

Mr. Doug Cox reported on several issues including:

Response to Intervention (RTI) - Statewide institutes were held in the fall of 2007 in Roanoke and Newport News. The objectives of the institutes included building understanding about RtI and its implementation in schools. In December, Virginia sent a team to Washington to participate in a national summit on RTI. The purpose was to provide training, information, and planning time for educational teams working on the implementation of early intervening services and response to intervention instructional approaches and also, to help states develop a state plan for implementing RTI and provide information about accessing various federal and state resources to assist with implementation.

Consolidation of two State Schools - work continues to move forward.

Mr. Cox talked about the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) plan to address the 1% cap requirements for the 2007-2008 Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP).

The department of education is developing an initiative wherein Virginia is able to get more potential leaders in area of special education.

General assembly – Mr. Cox reviewed the bills pertaining to education that had been introduced.

Friday, January 25, 2008

	Present	Absent	Members	Present	Absent
Judy Averill	x		Mona Holmes	x	
Mike Behrmann	x		Cindy Mills	x	
Suzanne Bowers	x		Jacqueline Nelson	x	
Bob Chappell	x		Peter Squire		x
Susanne Conroy		x	Carletta Wilson	x	
Sharon Duncan	x		Bob Whytal	x	
Anne Fischer	x		Christina Draper	x	
Melodie Henderson	x		Tamara Temoney		x
Carol Hamilton		x			

Department of Education Staff							
Doug Cox	x	Melissa Smith	x	Gloria Dalton			
Paul Raskopf	x	Cathy Pomfrey	x	Sandra Ruffin			
Judy Hudgins	x	Anu Upahadaya	x	Debbie Pfeiffer			
Pat Abrams	x						

Guests			
Barbara Cornicello	Amy Coutee'	Chip Greene	Susan Foster
Gail Holloman			

Subcommittee Reports

Personnel

Dr. Mike Behrmann reported for the committee on issues related to highly qualified (HQ) and the difficulty in recruiting special education teachers.

Constituency Involvement Report

Ms. Christina Draper reported for the committee some suggestions for alternative methods of satisfying the requirements for a parent survey under Indicator 8.

Data and Reports

Ms. Mary Ann Discenza reported on the data concerns and suggestions of what to do with the data.

Constituency Reports

Name	Report	Comments
Judy Averill	Written	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot is happening in the state in the area of transition. With baseline data being reported for Indicator #13 and #14, LEAs are analyzing their transition planning process and supports and services. • The T/TACs across the state have provided and continue to offer trainings, resources, and consultation to the LEAs. Their knowledge and wiliness to seek out resources has been valuable. • The 2008 VIRGINIA Transition Forum will be held in Roanoke this year in March. Registrations and presentation proposals have exceeded previous years.
Mike Behrmann	Written	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs across the state are actively modifying programs to respond to new licensure regulations by this summer. • Statewide VI consortium started offering coursework toward new license week of January 21. • State reported continuing significant shortages will continue through 2011-12. Speech & Language's highest need followed by ECSE, Hearing Impaired, students with disabilities accessing general curriculum and students with disabilities accessing adapted curriculum.
Suzanne Bowers	Written	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates from Region 4 testified to lawmakers on the hurtful connotations with the term "mental retarded." They were featured in the news after their successful effort to sway the committee's decision to change the term "mentally retarded" to "intellectual disability." • Mt. Daniel School celebrated "National Inclusive Schools Week" with a giant wall mural made by students and staff. The puzzle was chosen to celebrate the uniqueness and diversity, as well as learning, laughing, playing, and sharing life experiences together. • The VIRGINIA Coalition for Students with Disabilities continues to meet throughout the state, including Region 4 to meet with parents regarding the proposed regulations. There was good turn-out in Region 4 with parents working together to write public comment.
Bob Chappell	None	
Susanne Conroy	Absent	
Mary Ann Discenza	None	
Christina Draper	None	
Sharon Duncan	Written	<p>Still hearing concerns about qualified therapists. And, of course the buzz is the proposed changes in regulations. I attended a great meeting with Parent Resource represents in our region. They have three main concerns/comments: 1) getting parents involved in the transition process much earlier, 2) increased anxiety for Parents with children with Autism and 3), found the Local SEAC training provided by the department very helpful and would like to see a continuation of that training.</p>
Anne Fischer	Oral	

Constituency Reports

Name	Report	Comments
Carol Hamilton	Absent	
Melodie Henderson	Written	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In October 2007, the Special Education committee of the VEA (Virginia Education Association) reviewed and discussed the regulations and put forth 8 recommendations to VDOE. • Secondary Special Education teachers in Inclusion models feel stretched too thin with being scheduled on multiple grade levels for instruction which hinders their ability to meet the needs of the students on their caseloads in the areas of planning and resource.
Mona Holmes	Written	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I sent out a letter the first of January to each LEA in my region to introduce myself. I also asked each for local SEAC chairperson contact information. Responses are coming in daily. I plan to make a contact list for sending out information. • We are looking forward to Thursday's (Jan. 31) meeting with Emily Dreyfus to learn more about these regulation changes and how to make public comment. • Also, PREP along with Albemarle, Greene, Charlottesville, Louisa, Fluvanna, and Madison are conducting a one-day Parent Conference and Resource Fair on March 8, 2008. There will be a full day session offered on transition.
Cindy Mills	Written	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing challenge – conducting new student's LEAs and previous placement(s) to request current and accurate school records (& following through with re-requesting requested information that is not received). • Coordinating the provisions of SOL testing with so many different LEAs is a challenge as well. It becomes more complicated if students move to multiple school placements during the same school year. • Focused instruction aligned with SOLs becomes challenging also when students move between multiple school placements (or settings) throughout each school year. • Working with various LEAs to develop IEPs in a timely fashion can be challenging at times. • Finding related service providers (Speech, OT) to provide services included in student's IEPs is growing more difficult.
Jacqueline Nelson	None	
Peter Squire	Absent	
Tamara Temoney	Absent	
Bob Whytal	None	
Carletta Wilson	None	
PEATC Barbara Cornicello		Provided members with a brief report on PEATC's Latino Outreach program

Policy and Regulations Subcommittee Report

Ms. Anne Fischer reported that the subcommittee had met in Richmond and again before the Friday portion of the current SSEAC meeting. The subcommittee plans to meet again prior to the full committee's meeting (16th April in Blacksburg starting at 1:00) assuming public comment for regulations will still be open. The subcommittee will attempt to finish the draft on the SSEAC's comment for the draft regulations.

Break

Public Comment Review

Ms. Mona Holmes, in absence of the secretary, reviewed the public comments. It was noted that some issues raised are currently being addressed by the policy subcommittee.

Possible Future Agenda Items

- Inclusive practices - Montgomery County
- Jeff Phenicie and/or Sharon Siler - 2% modified standards
- Paul Raskopf – data system
- RTI
- Shortage of Speech services –Marie Ireland
- Pat Burgess – July, statewide initiative on school discipline
- Radford T/TAC – transition
- James River Middle/ HS, Botetourt – lessons/results SIG pilot sites
- Youth Leadership Forum maybe July – Peter Squire wanted to maybe coordinate with the July meeting
- All Ad Hoc committees should formulate draft annual report for Wednesday evening meeting

Meeting adjourned

Future Meeting Dates and Locations

April 17-18, 2008 – Blacksburg

July 17-18, 2008 – Richmond or somewhere in Region III

October 23 -24, 2008 – Winchester or Warrenton

January 22-23, 2009 – Richmond

April 23-24, 2009 – Williamsburg

July 23-24, 2009 – Richmond