

Meeting with your Legislator

Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education

Dean Gates and Hannah Foreman

January 2014 Council Meeting



Before the Meeting

- Make sure that you have everything you need:
 - Talking Points
 - Business Cards
 - Camera
- Find the ***team leader*** for your group
 - The team leader is in charge of bringing the legislative packet
- Decide ***who*** will discuss each topic
- Arrive 5-10 minutes early
- Check in with legislative staff

Legislative Packets



- Bills
- Position papers
- Supporting documents
- Newsletter
- Community Forum flier

In the Meeting



- Introduction
- Give the legislative packet
- Explain the issues (no more than 5 minutes/issue)
- When you are done talking, ask for a group photo with the Legislator
- Thank them for their time and support of the Council

Introductions



- ❑ Mention if you live in his/her district
- ❑ Make a personal connection, if any
- ❑ Explain why you are involved with the Council



Explaining the Issues

- Locate the information on the issue in the packet
- Briefly describe the issue using talking points
- Ask for their support
- Ask if they have questions/need more information

Meeting Do's & Don'ts

Do

- Stay on topic
- Watch your time
- Pay attention to the legislator/team members
- Take notes on follow up items
- Turn off your phone
- Show appreciation

Do Not

- Bring up unrelated topics
- Speak too long
- Provide answers to questions you don't know
- Interrupt legislator or other group members
- Text/talk on the phone
- Argue with the legislator

After the Meeting

- All teams go to the second floor lounge immediately after
- Debrief with GCDSE staff member
 - Was the legislator for/against any Council priorities?
 - Was any follow-up information requested?
 - Did you learn any interesting facts about the legislator/legislative aide?
- Sign the thank you card
- Send any photos with the legislator to Hannah

Complex Behavior Collaborative

Ask

Please join the Council in supporting General Fund/Mental Health base funding to continue services provided by the Complex Behavior Collaborative (CBC) in the FY15 budget.

Complex Behavior Collaborative

What

1. The Complex Behavior Collaborative (CBC) serves individuals who experience high-risk behaviors which could harm themselves or others.
2. The CBC provides support & intervention to individuals who are at risk of being removed from their communities and sent to an institution.
3. The CBC allows behavior intervention experts to train and advise local providers and families, increasing their knowledge of behavior management.

Complex Behavior Collaborative

Data

1. See the position paper for data on the CBC's success.

Complex Behavior Collaborative

Why

1. The CBC has a proven record of keeping individuals from leaving current placements and going to more restrictive/costly environments (Alaska Psychiatric Institute, out-of-state placement or corrections).
2. Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) costs were able to be reallocated from individuals who received CBC services, due to the decreased length of stay.
3. Developing in-state provider capacity is important to meet the needs of individuals with challenging behaviors.

Complex Behavior Collaborative

Share

A personal story or someone's positive experience with the CBC.

Complex Behavior Collaborative

Ask

Please support a \$450.0 GF/MH base funding increment to continue necessary services provided by the Complex Behavior Collaborative (CBC) in the FY15 budget.

Employment First

Ask

*Please join the Council in supporting HB __: The
Employment First Bill.*

Employment First

What is it?

1. The Employment First Bill requires the departments of Education, Labor and Health & Social Services to:
 - a. Make gainful employment the first and preferred outcome in the provision of services for all working age Alaskans with disabilities.
 - b. Annually provide data to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.
2. Gainful employment under Employment First is found in workplaces where:
 - a. Wages are at or above minimum wage.
 - b. Wages are not lower than those paid to employees without disabilities.
 - c. The setting is integrated (people with disabilities work with people without disabilities).
3. The bill does not require employers to give preference to hiring persons with disabilities.

Employment First

Why is it needed?

1. Employment First leads to greater self-sufficiency, which decreases the number of public benefits needed.
2. Employment for people with disabilities is a focus for states nationally.
3. There is a significant difference in the employment rates of workers with disabilities and those without disabilities.
4. With the retirement of the *Baby Boomer* generation, workforce increases are needed.

Employment First

Share

A story (your own or someone else's) about the positive impacts of employment.

Employment First

Ask

Please support HB ___.

Restraint and Seclusion

Ask

Please join the Council in supporting HB __: The Keeping Alaskan Kids Safe Bill.

Restraint and Seclusion

Goals

1. All school districts should be safe for students and personnel.
2. Restraint/seclusion should be minimized as emergency crisis interventions.

Restraint and Seclusion

What is it?

1. Restraint and seclusion procedures are only to be used when:
 - a. Less restrictive interventions have been tried and found ineffective.
 - b. The student's behavior poses imminent danger to the student or others.

2. When a restraint/seclusion incident occurs, schools may NOT use:
 - a. Chemical restraint
 - b. Mechanical restraint
 - c. Methods that restrict breathing
 - d. Prone restraint

3. When a restraint/seclusion incident occurs, schools MUST:
 - a. Notify parents within 24 hours.
 - b. Provide a written report of the incident.
 - c. Have a review process to discuss strategies and supports for students.

4. All Alaskan school districts must:
 - a. Develop restraint/seclusion policies and make them available to the public.
 - b. Ensure adequate staff is trained in crisis intervention strategies.
 - c. Report the number of restraint/seclusion incidents annually to the Department of Education and Early Development.

Restraint and Seclusion

Why is it needed?

1. Restraint and seclusion are not evidence-based educational or behavioral programs, therapies, treatments or strategies.
2. This bill protects children/teachers in school districts that do not have restraint/seclusion policies (see 2009 survey info in position paper).

Restraint and Seclusion

Share

A personal story or someone's positive experience.

Restraint and Seclusion

Ask

Please support HB ___.

Tonight



- Review position papers
 - Do you feel comfortable explaining each issue?

- Read legislator bios
 - Which Legislators are you meeting with?

- Practice talking points aloud
 - Have you adapted them to be your own?